DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 605 CG 024 423

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TITLE School Psychologists' Use of Time: Interventions and Effectiveness.
PUB DATE Mar 92
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists (24th, Nashville, TN, March 20-24, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Counseling Effectiveness; Counselor Client Ratio; *Counselor Evaluation; Counselor Teacher Cooperation; Elementary Secondary Education; School Counseling; *School Psychologists; *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

School psychologists are currently being called upon to spend more time in direct and indirect interventions to assist students with academic and behavioral problems. This study examined if time used for interventions is related to school psychologists' effectiveness. A group of Iowa school psychologists (N=91), who in turn identified up to three teachers (N=196) with whom they had been involved in implementing direct or indirect interventions to assist students, were surveyed. Psychologists completed a survey which included background information, information about work assignment and number of hours per week allotted for that activity, and information pertaining to three recently completed cases. Teachers completed a survey which included background information, degree of contact with the psychologist, quality of school psychology services, and the effectiveness of each intervention. LISREL was used to test the causal relationship among selected characteristics of the school psychologist, the teacher, the implementation of the intervention, and psychologists' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the interventions. Teachers' and psychologists' ratings of the effectiveness of the interventions were not consistent. Teachers rated psychologists who spent time involved in direct interventions as more effective than psychologists who spend time involved in indirect interventions. No support was found for the idea that gender or years of experience had an influence on psychologists' ratings by teachers. As caseloads increased time spent on indirect interventions dwindled and time spent on direct interventions significantly decreased. (ABL)

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SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' USE OF TIME: INTERVENTIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS

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Running Head: EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The traditional role of the school psychologist has emphasized psychoeducational assessment and diagnosis. But school psychologists are currently being called on to spend more time in direct and indirect interventions to assist students with academic and behavioral problems. This presentation answers the question: are interventions implemented by school psychologists who spend time on interventions rated as more effective by teachers and school psychologists? This research surveyed school psychologists and teachers; LISREL was used to analyze the data.

The influence that gender, age of the psychologist, number of years working as a psychologist, caseload, time spent on direct and indirect interventions, and other variables have on perceived school psychologist effectiveness will be discussed.

Practitioners and trainers of school psychologist will be encouraged by the results of this pilot study, which suggest that time spent on interventions pays off in increased effectiveness.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' USE OF TIME: INTERVENTIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS

The traditional role of the school psychologist has emphasized psychoeducational assessment and diagnosis. But there are increasing calls for school psychologists to spend more time doing direct and indirect interventions which will assist students with academic and behavior problems (Bardon, 1983). However, there has been little research on the relation between time spent on interventions and school psychologists' effectiveness, as viewed by school psychologists and teachers. The purpose of the study was to explore if time used for interventions is related to school psychologists' effectiveness.

Method

This study surveyed a randomly selected group of Iowa school psychologists, who in turn identified up to three teachers with whom they had been involved in implementing direct or indirect interventions to assist students. A total of 91 psychologists and 196 teachers took part in the study. Each participating psychologist completed a survey providing background information, information about work assignment and number of hours per week allotted for that activity, and information pertaining to three recently completed cases, with names of teachers who were involved. Identified teachers completed a survey which included background information, degree of contact with the psychologist, quality of school psychology services, and the effectiveness of each intervention implemented.

LISREL (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989) was used to test the causal

relation among selected characteristics of the school psychologist, the teacher, the implementation of intervention, and psychologists' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the interventions. The structural equations model used was fully recursive and was based on previous research (e.g., Brady, 1985; Elliot, Witt, Galvin, & Peterson, 1984; Witt, 1986).

Results and Conclusions

The results of this pilot study suggests that a number of different variables affect the perception of the success of interventions in which school psychologist are involved. Teachers' and psychologists' rating of the effectiveness of interventions are not consistent. Teachers rate psychologists who spend time involved in direct interventions as more effective than psychologists who spend time involved in indirect interventions; teachers appear to appreciate direct interventions more than indirect interventions. Time spent on direct and indirect interventions resulted in similar effectiveness ratings by psychologists.

This study found no support for the idea that gender or years of experience had an influence on psychologists' ratings by teachers. Psychologists appear to believe that as they mature in years (age) their interventions are more effective, however.

Caseload had the most striking influence on the amount of time psychologists spent on interventions; as caseloads increased time spent on indirect interventions dwindled and time spent on direct interventions significantly decreased. Teachers ratings of psychologists' effectiveness was directly influenced by caseload; the higher the caseloads the lower

teachers' effectiveness rating. Psychologists' rating of the effectiveness of their interventions was not influenced by caseload.

Practitioners and trainers of school psychologist should be encouraged with the results of this study. School psychologists who spend time involved in interventions are more likely to be involved in successful interventions, and are more likely to be viewed by themselves and teachers as effective.

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Figure 1. Influences on Teachers' and Psychologists' Ratings of Psychologists' Effectiveness

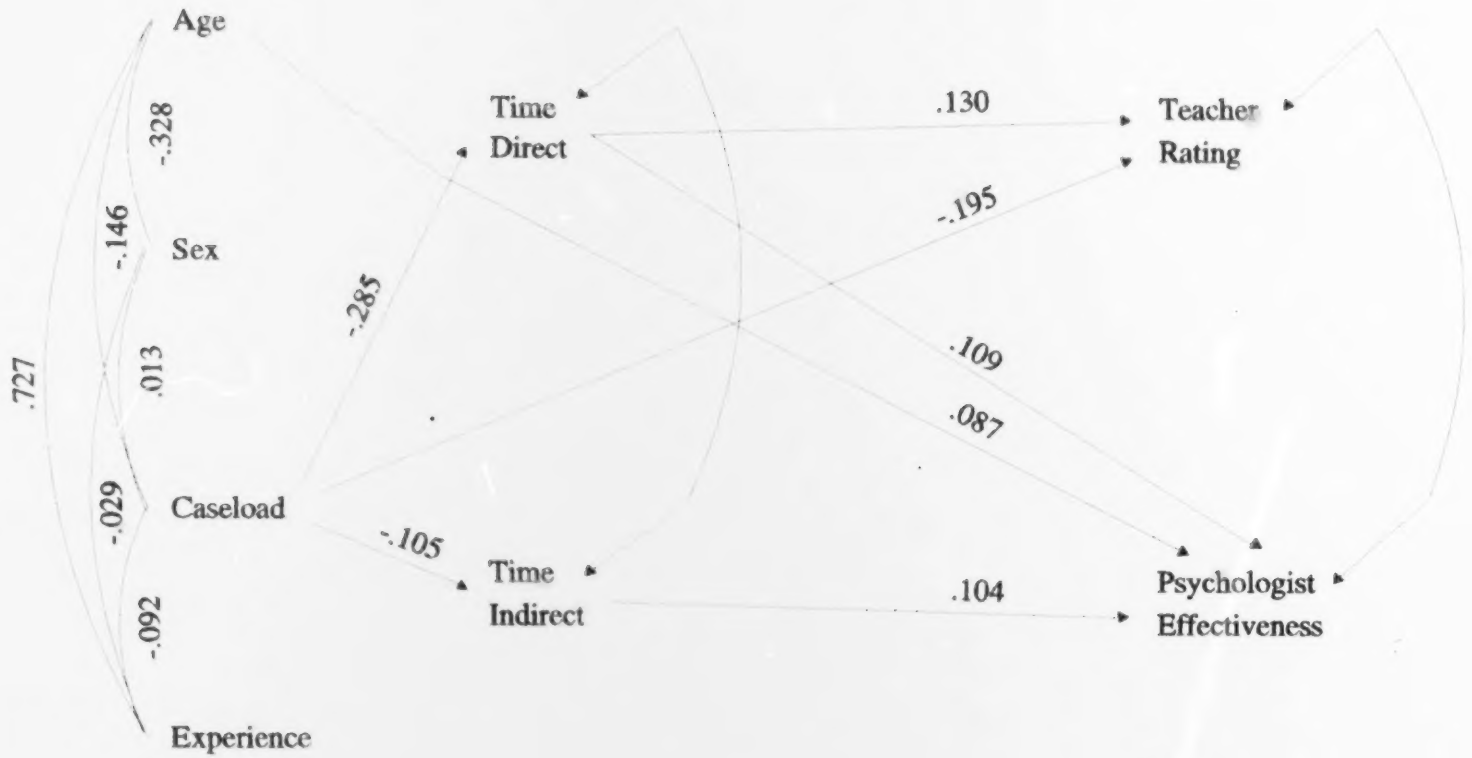

Figure 2. Reduced Model: Influences on Teachers' and Psychologists' Ratings of Psychologists' Effectiveness